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An Introduction to Restoration Comedy: An Essay on *She Would If She Could*

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I

The reign of Charles I (1625-1649) was dominated by a religious and constitutional crisis that eventually caused the English Civil War (1642). The victors, the Parliamentarians and Puritans, promptly closed all the theatres in London, supposedly to appease the wrath of God. For about eighteen years or so all actors were looked upon as being vagabonds and outcasts. Two years after the death of Oliver Cromwell, the Stuart monarchy was re-established in Britain with the return of Charles II from forced exile in France in 1660. The theatres formally reopened in November and by 1700 the English theatre had passed through its silver age (the Restoration)[1]. We may safely call it the golden age of English drama that turned out a great many talented Elizabethan dramatists, from Shakespeare down. The most remarkable dramatists, the giants of English drama's silver age, are Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, whose plays are called Restoration comedy.

It is because Holland ranks Restoration comedy next to Elizabethan drama that he calls it the silver age. Generally speaking, a critic of such understanding as he is certainly in the minority. On the contrary, as

Restoration comedy writers dealt with a number of immoral themes, their comedies have been almost without exception damned or branded as " trivial, gross and dull," ever since the seventeenth century. That is why Restoration comedies had received little critical attention until the middle of twentieth century.

A witty young single hero is given to dissipation every day and longs for a Don Juan life-style; Public order and morals or molalistic virtues do not exist within such a life-style. It is a daily occurrence that the rake-hero has love affairs with several women and has another man's wife as his mistress. Jeremy Collier condemned and attacked the immoral nature of the comedies of this age in the spring of 1698 in his provocatively titled book: *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage.* Regarding "morals," critics who have been ultra-critical of these comedies had a prejudice against a man who believed in such an indecent play in which promiscuous sexual relations are depicted; accordingly, they regarded him as a man of eccentric taste. In 1823, Charles Lamb published his famous essay "On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century," embodying the then radical suggestion that these plays were a world, "Utopia of Gallantry," to which the ordinary moral reactions of an audience ought not to apply. Although Lamb vindicated Restoration comedy, Thomas Macaulay, his contemporary, based on moral judgement and dismissed it.

Both Collier's and Macaulay's criticisms are based on moral judgements (virtue or vice) and are lacking in understanding that wit replaces moral judgement in Restoration comedy. Wit or witty spirit is the very quintessence of Restoration comedy. It goes without saying that a wit should be endowed with intellectual faculties so that he might judge accurately; it is worthy of a gentleman that he should act smartly and aloofly. Hence, this

kind of sophisticated comedy does not always appeal to audiences. Restoration comedy is no mere work on the topic of the day, although it is difficult to understand it unless we are somewhat acquainted with the manners and customs of the period.

Throughout the long build-up to the Elizabethan period, popular theatre had appealed to all classes. After Charles II re-established the monarchy, the theatre became distinctly an upper-class diversion, and middle-class groups, particularly Puritans and merchants, were kept from the theatres: for the King and the returning Royalists demanded the French genre and by so doing, made the comedy of manners fashionable. Restoration comedy was an elite theatre: for it was written specifically to suit the taste of the limited members of the fashionable world. As mentioned later, the Restoration created an epoch in the history of English drama with the arrival of "actresses."

Sir George Etherege (1635-1691), who is the subject of the present paper, is the first remarkable dramatist of English drama's silver age and could be called the founder of Restoration comedy. He wrote only three comedies and *She Would If She Could* (1668) which is examined here was his second play. Most contemporary critics considered it "the first fully developed comedy of manners within the Restoration."[2] More than 300 years have passed since this kind of comedy was written. Yet Restoration comedy has been favourite of appreciative theatregoers and audiences seem to have enjoyed them despite the confusions and condemnations introduced by the critics. These comedies are still being produced on the English stage and seem to maintain their popularity as good drama.

On the contrary, Restoration comedy is known only to a small number of specialists in Japan; most people are unaware of. it. I might be one of the

small number of people of eccentric taste. The aim of the present paper is to examine Etherege's second play with reference to the Restoration, and to clarify its significance by making its characteristics clear. In other words, this is an essay to counter the biased view that Restoration comedy is "trivial, gross and dull," dealing only with immoral themes and manners.

II

Before examining the play, a plot summary is required. The play opens with a particularly nauseating conversation between two young rake-heroes-about-town, as their names, Courtall and Freeman, imply. They spend much of their time in pursuit of the fair sex and planning their next sexual adventures. Courtall has Sir Oliver, a country knight, as his friend. Courtall knows through Mrs Sentry, gentlewoman to Lady Cockwood, that Sir Oliver has recently brought his wife (Lady Cockwood), Sir Joslin (her kinsman and neighbour in the country), Gatty and Ariana (his kinswomen and pretty young heiresses) to London. Lady Cockwood is portrayed as a hypocrite, whose only wish is to obtain Courtall and at the same time preserve her honour. She is a middle-aged woman who feels discontented with married life. But Courtall does not find her attractive and has been avoiding having an affair with her by telling a well contrived lie.

Sir Oliver feels discontented, too, with his dull married life in the country. He longs to entertain himself again in London and is planning debauchery. Sir Oliver invites Courtall to dine, but Courtall promises Sentry that he will visit Lady Cockwood because she might be the means through which he can meet the two pretty sisters. (Act I)

As Courtall does not visit her, her apprehensions are raised and she

becomes fretful. However, Courtall eventually arrives secretly at her lodgings, but he returns soon to the eating-house on the pretext that his friends are waiting for him. The promise of a meeting with her the next morning in the New Exchange enables him to escape. (Act II)

When Lady Cockwood comes to the appointed place, she meets Gatty and Ariana there. This is because Courtall has plotted with the New Exchange Woman (Mrs Gazette) to help him avoid Lady Cockwood by bringing the two sisters to interrupt them. He invites all three ladies to "a treat and a fiddle" at The Bear (the eating-house), where the separate threads of the plot will meet. The comic high point of their mutual hypocrisy comes in this scene. Although Sir Oliver has professed affection for and loyalty to his wife, he goes off in his absurd penitential suit to dine with Sir Joslin, Mr Rakehell and some harlots. By coincidence, Courtall, Freeman and the ladies arrive at The Bear just ahead of them.

When Lady Cockwood learns that her husband has just arrived, her fear is that she will be discovered in Courtall's company. Courtall contrives a plan to prevent the discovery of the ladies: they will dress up in masquerade costumes and pretend to be the harlots. In the dance that follows Sir Oliver scorns his wife, not knowing that the woman in his arms is actually his wife. She is unmasked by Sentry and reproaches her husband for his faithless conduct. Although Sir Oliver apologizes profusely to his wife for his debauchery, he is ready to follow Sir Joslin to a new appointment with harlots in the New Spring Garden. (ACT III)

Lady Cockwood notices that Courtall has been paying particular attention to the young heiress (Gatty). In order to test his constancy Lady Cockwood forges letters of invitation (which were, in fact, written by Sentry) from the girls to the men to force Courtall to choose between her and Gatty.

When he declines her invitation, Lady Cockwood, in a jealous rage, tells Sir Oliver not to allow Courtall visit her, saying that he has tried to seduce her (a lie in fact). Disregarding Lady Cockwood's warning, the two girls arrive at the New Spring Garden where Lady Cockwood has summoned Courtall by the forged letter. When Courtall and Freeman arrive there in response to the notes supposedly written by Gatty and Ariana, they are surprised to discover that the girls have never written such a letter. At Lady Cockwood's sudden entrance Courtall and Freeman suspect that she is somehow involved. Just in time, Sir Oliver enters and attacks Courtall, and the two fight off the stage with the ladies following and shrieking. (ACT IV)

Freeman and Courtall visit Lady Cockwood one following the other. When her husband returns home unexpectedly, she hides one of the men in a closet, and the other under a table. A rapid series of farcical events then follow. Without knowing that the two men are listening, the sisters discuss their fondness for them and their suspicion that Lady Cockwood was responsible for the letters and is in love with Courtall. But when Ariana discovers the men, her shriek brings the Cockwoods back into the room.

With a display of quick wit, Courtall blames Sentry, explaining that they had bribed her to hide them. When the handwriting proves to be hers, Courtall lies that it was devised by Lady Cockwood to correct their loose conduct. She, of course, is grateful to him for his quick wit. Courtall and Freeman are now inclined to matrimony, and they extract the girls' agreement to a month-long courtship. Lady Cockwood forgives Sir Oliver and concludes with a vow to confine herself henceforth to family matters; Sir Oliver ends the comedy with a pledge of love to his wife. (Act V)

The play is composed of intricate plots, which is one of the recognizable characteristics of Restoration comedy. This could lead to a degree of

boredom and confusion, as Restoration dramatists took more care in the use of dialogue and spontaneous wit than dramatic action. As George H. Nettleton pointed out, their comedies are "weak in plot construction and in dramatic action."[3] Yet the tradition of the comedy of manners has taken firm root in English theatre and has been emulated by Somerset Maugham and Noël Coward in this century.

Regarding the two plots in *She Would If She Could*, I will examine each plot and point out some conspicuous characteristics.

III

Regarding the plot dealing with the relationship between Lady Cockwood and Courtall, Etherege's very lewd title gives us a clue; it means that Lady Cockwood would have an affair with her husband's friend, Courtall, if she was able. Courtall has no intention to have an affair with her, however. He explains the reason why he avoids it to Freeman:

> .....she is the very spirit of impertinence, so
> foolishly fond and troublesome, that no man above
> sixteen is able to endure her. (I. i. 265-7)[4]

In addition, Courtall is bored with her strong carnal desires:

> .....she
> would by her good will give her lover no more rest,
> than a young squire that has newly set up a coach,
> does his only pair of horses. (I. i. 278-81)

As Courtall is interested in the pretty heiresses who are now staying at Lady Cockwood's lodgings, he maintains the *status quo* in his relationship with

Lady Cockwood: he attempts to get Gatty, taking advantage of Lady Cockwood. It is because Lady Cockwood is not satisfied with her married life in the country that she wishes to seek sexual gratification outside the bonds of marriage. To put it more frankly, her dissatisfaction is due to the fact that she can not achieve sexual gratification from her husband. Sir Oliver's lines when he gets drunk and curses her endorse it: "the very sight of that face makes me more impotent than a eunuch (II. ii. 151-2)."

Owing to discontentment with married life in the country, men wish to abandon themselves to dissipation, while their wives wish to have an affair with other men. The dramatists of the Restoration relentlessly depict the dark gloomy side of married life and emphasize that women have carnal desires as well as men. Immoral as this concept may be, we can not deny that this is just one real aspect of conjugal relationships. Etherege offers the foolish Cockwoods as an example of wrong conduct in the relationship between the sexes.

Restoration dramatists seldom had an authorial spokesman and preached no obvious morality. Furthermore, they leave the final judgement and evaluation to the audience, and for the most part conclude their comedies with ironical endings. This could be why their comedies are called "intellectual." Although Courtall seems to have had an affair with several women (this is clear from the opening dialogue between Courtall and Freeman), he intends to marry the pretty young heiress after a month's period of testing. In Etherege's third play, *The Man of Mode* (1676), Dorimant the rake-hero tries to seduce Bellinda while he already has a mistress; her friend, Mrs Loveit. After a conflict among them, he falls in love at first sight with Harriet, the pretty witty heiress, and, casting off his two mistresses, resolves to go off to the country to court her at the close of the play.

The ending is more ironical in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675). Horner, a young man of fashion, has put the story around London by means of a doctor, his friend Quack, that he has become impotent following a trip to France. He believes that this trick will, paradoxically, achieve his aim of attracting women. Horner eventually seduces several ladies and makes love to them. But the play ends with all the women keeping Horner's secret. He remains unpunished and will continue to live a Don Juan life-style.

According to Elizabeth Howe, "some time during the last months of 1660, a professional English actress appeared in a play on the English public stage for the first time" and" of the eighty or so actresses we know by name on the Restoration stage between 1660 and 1689, apparently about a mere one-quarter of this number led what were considered to be respectable lives."[5] Before the Restoration there were no professional actresses on the English stage, and female roles had almost always been played by boy actors. The advent of the actress in this period was of epoch-making significance —— a historic moment for English theatre. The generally inferior status of women in the workplace and their exclusion from public power was reflected in the female situation within the theatre companies. Some actresses such as Moll Davis and Nell Gwyn left the stage to become the King's mistresses. Society assumed that a woman who displayed herself on the public stage was probably a whore, and the theatre companies in fact exploited the sexual availability of their women as a means of attracting audiences. Some actresses not only played the role of a prostitute or mistress, but actually became one.

With this background, the actresses of the time who played the roles of mistresses or prostitutes overlapped actual life. The new sexual realism provided on the stage delighted the audience and helped to promote sensitive,

radical consideration of female roles and relations between the sexes. This could not have been produced by boy actors. In any case the change was effected: women had replaced boys forever in the English public theatre. It is obvious that a good deal of the licentiousness of Restoration comedy may be blamed on the positive exploitation of the actresses' sexuality, and of course it gave not a little influence to the dramatists. Howe points out that as it was society's view that an actress was whorish, fickle and sexually available, Restoration dramatists manifested the sceptical attitude toward marriage and focused cynically on adultery, inconstancy and on the battle of the sexes. This could be why Restoration comedies end not with a happy ending, but with an ironical ending —— Howe's ramark is persuasive enough.[6]

As previously mentioned, Restoration comedy is amoral and its quintessence is wit. For this reason it is sometimes found hard to understand. I am much indebted to Thomas H. Fujimura. According to him, wit includes both fancy and judgement. He states that as judgement it implies good taste, common sense, acumen and penetration; as fancy, on the other hand, it implies novelty, strikingness, suddenness and remoteness. Fujimura classifies the characters into three types and calls them "Truewit," "Witless," and Witwoud" who falls between "Truewit" and "Witless": by nature he is related to "Witless," but aspires to be a wit.[7] A libertine hero is a pursuer of wit and is interested in this form of intellectual pleasure. Since wit is considered a measure of intellectual superiority, his concern is more intellectual and aesthetic than sensual.

It is a natural consequence that Courtall and Gatty, Dorimant and Harriet, arrive at a happy ending, since they are all "Truewits." Horner, no less witty than the above, retains his character to the end and from the very nature of things can never be punished for his debauchery. It is a convention

of Restoration comedy that a "Truewit" wins at the end, while "Witlesses" such as Sir Jasper and Pinchwife are cuckolded and Sparkish the "Witwoud" is robbed of his fiancée. "Pleasure, both intellectual and sensual," states Fujimura, "is especially important in Hobbes' psychology and ethics ..... Hence even the carnal pleasure of sex is good, though less permanent than intellectual pleasure; for it, too, contributes to man's happiness."[8]

That a woman pursues a fleeing man is comic enough; for Etherege reverses the proper relation of hunter and quarry. Lady Cockwood does not have her wish fulfilled, however. Why did the dramatist introduce this plot into his comedy ? Needless to say, any moral interpretation —— as it is inexcusable and abominable dissipation that a married wife should have an affair with another man, she is treated as such —— does not apply to this kind of comedy. In naming his comedy *She Would If She Could* Etherege called attention to the most intriguing of the personages. Lady Cockwood's hypocrisy is habitual and her physical desires are entwined with her conception of heroic love and honour, giving us ample indication of her role as social pretender or précieuse. She becomes the prototype of a common figure: a woman can be as predatory as a man. She is an early example of the sex-starved women who are ridiculed in the plays of the period. She is a satirical portrait; her insistence on her honour anticipates Wycherley's savage exposure of précieuses in *The Country Wife*. Though Lady Cockwood's charms may be rather faded, she is physically attractive and she impresses us with her sheer energy and temperament. Once she suspects that Courtall is attracted by Gatty, Lady Cockwood contrives a plot for Courtall out of jealousy and seeks her revenge upon him.

Making the conflict between Don Juan and lustful villainess its pivotal plot, Etherege dramatically portrays the out-of-marital relationships between

the sexes through this human comedy. This is worth appreciating as a drama. It is no wonder that the relationship between Courtall and Lady Cockwood has neither ended in marriage nor an affair. With the advent of actresses as a turning point, the dramatist found it significant to make a searching inquiry into the out-of-marital relationship rather than finding it hard to end the comedy. He created a play which demands that audiences think about and evaluate the action and the characters.

IV

The organization of Restoration comedy is, in general, very conventional: the plot consists of an "outwitting" situation involving "Truewits," "Witwouds" and "Witlesses." The basic situation is: The "Truewit" man outwits "Witwoud" and "Witless" who stand in his way, and gains the "Truewit" woman and her wealth at the same time. Another plot of *She Would If She Could* in which Courtall outwits Lady Cockwood and is about to embark on marriage with Gatty is in accordance with this convention. Yet Lady Cockwood draws our interest for a number of reasons, beginning with our curiousity about a woman who must seek sexual gratification outside marriage. Consequently, apart from Courtall, the other three characters are of weak personality. In any case, Etherege has left these four characters too ineffectual to control their world.

These young gallants' chief concern is having a love affair. The cooing of love is, however, replaced by the heated battle of wits. The girls jeer most keenly when they are much in love, and in their raillery are quite a match for their love. In the courtship scene raillery dominates the dialogue. Their battle of wits exists for its own sake and therefore has nothing to do with plot

development. Although we can conventionally expect their embarking on marriage at the close of the play, we find it an uncertain, unnatural ending, since it is not convincing.

Gatty and Ariana are witty, emancipated women —— well aware of their own value and able to meet the gallants on equal terms. As George Meredith points out, the battle of the sexes could be a motif for comedy; Etherege portrays love in this play as various forms of antagonism.[9] A typical instance is, when Courtall and Freeman, attracted by the masked young sisters, pursue them, the girls say, likening the wits to men of war cruising here, to watch for prizes:

> ARIANA. Now if these should prove two men-of-war that are cruising here, to watch for prizes.
> GATTY. Would they had courage enough to set upon us; I long to be engaged.
> ARIANA. Look, look yonder, I protest they chase us.
> GATTY. Let us bear away then; if they be truly valiant they'll quickly make more sail, and board us. (II. i. 76-82)

The mutual pursuit is carried on in witty language that is drawn from the vocabulary of naval warfare. Thus, the love-chase is a battle; "cruising," "set upon," "engaged" and board" here have sexual connotations. Although these are all sublimated witty expressions, it is clear that the girls are favourably disposed toward the young gallants.[10] They enter into the love-game with the young men, but with a clear objective in mind.

Restoration comedy has two types of heroes: one is the rake-hero who pursues one girl after another like Courtall, Dorimant and Horner, while the other is a character like Young Bellair or Harcourt who takes marriage seriously and is unconcerned with debauchery.[11] Two plots coexist there;

the main plot is circulating, which corresponds with the Don Juan life-style; the minor plot has centripetal force. Courtall is not a mere Don Juan, but a man of rare acumen and ability, which also applies to Dorimant and Horner. Courtall is also an intellectual, sophisticated man of wit who dominates the play and is the master-manipulator of the action. This type of hero is sure to appeal to an audience. Incomprehensibly enough, this urban libertine who has had the Don Juan life-style and has been sceptical about matrimony resolves at the close of the play to go off to the country[12] to court Gatty.

It might be highly unlikely for a rake-hero to have this ending, though the play's convention makes us expect it. This ending has not been brought about by a convincing process, but there is a contradiction between process and its natural consequence. This contradiction might be regarded as a defect; however, this is the essential quality of Restoration comedy, in that it promotes a degree of irony peculiar to its ending.

What is Gatty's response to Courtall's courtship in the last scene ? :

> GATTY. These gentlemen have found it so convenient lying in lodgings, they'll hardly venture on the trouble of taking a house of their own.
> COURTALL. A pretty country-seat, madam, with a handsome parcel of land, and other necessaries belonging to't, may tempt us; but for a town tenement that has but one poor conveniency, we are resolved we'll never deal. (V. i. 513-20)

To paraphrase the above, Gatty is asking: Are you sure that you can be satisfied with one wife when you have had several mistresses ? Courtall's response continues her metaphor: A charming country wife is preferable to town women, therefore we will never settle for the latter. But he requires at

the same time that his wife must bring quite a respectable fortune. Previous to this Courtall expresses his idealistic way of living: "all the happiness a gentleman can desire, is to live at liberty, till he be forced that way to pay his own (V. i. 494-6)." This egocentric libertine's sceptical view of life is common to all Restoration rake-heroes.

Subsequently the two gallants must undergo a trial. In the final scence we find the characteristic tentative or ironic resolution, unlike the purely comic resolution. Gatty and Ariana place the gallants under a month's probation, and although it seems likely that they will marry, the men's comments strike an ironic note:

> COURTALL. If the heart of man be not very deceitful, 'tis very likely it may be so.
> FREEMAN. A month is a tedious time, and will be a dangerous trial of our resolutions; but I hope we shall not repent before marriage, whate'er we do after. (V. i. 573-7)

The irony is deepened even more when Etherege then turns to the Cockwood marriage. The gist of Lady Cockwood's final lines is that as she has felt a threat to her chastity in London, she will "hereafter modestly confine myself [herself] to the humble affairs of my [her] own family." Can her hypocritical lines be interpreted literally? Seeing through to her true nature, Courtall is making an insinuating remark for her benefit:

> COURTALL. 'Tis a very pious resolution, madam, and the better to confirm you in it, pray entertain an able chaplain. (V. i. 635-7)

Since she can not be fulfilled sexually at home, Courtall recommends her to have an affair with a chaplain. Etherege gives to Sir Oliver the final lines.

How ironical they are:

> SIR OLIVER. Give me thy hand, my virtuous, my dear;
> Henceforwards may our mutual loves increase,
> And when we are abed, we'll sign the peace. (V. i. 669-71)

At the close of the play we can divide the characters into three groups; and their views of life, marriage and ethics are briefly manifested in their lines. Their views are very useful when we see their future. Most of Sir Joslin's songs function as characterization of him: as is clear from his final song (V. i. 664-8) larded with sexual references, he will think low creatures like Rakehell and whores are the finest company, and lead a dissipated life. There is a degree of hope for the young couples, although the ending of the comedy is thus ironical. Etherege has introduced the socially desirable institution of marriage into his world of comic anarchy where adultery is not challenged at all. It may safely be said that Etherege had sound judgement: for he gives the final victory to the young girls, asserting the centrality of marriage, with all of its imperfections. The worst of all groups is the Cockwoods'. Learning no lesson from his bitter experience, Sir Oliver will lead a dissipated life in London against his pledge; his wife, after returning to her farmhouse, will pursue another man while pretending to be a chaste wife.

The idealistic aspect (the dramatist asserts the centrality of marriage) and the questionable aspect (he also deals with illicit sexual intercourse) coexist in Restoration comedy, which creats the dual nature of the hero. This seems to be the major cause for the ironical uncertain ending. Regarding the questionable aspect, even Shakespeare the great dramatist of comic genius would not portray a sophisticated, intelligent rake-hero. Shakespeare's "green world of comedy"[13] never covers all human comedy. It admits of no

doubt that the questionable aspect which Etherege depicted could be seen as one variation of comedy dealing with the battle of the sexes.

A significance of Restoration comedy is, I suggest, that the sexual realism inevitably made manifest by the advent of actresses has promoted the portrayal of such a questionable aspect, however minor it might be.

Notes

I am much obliged to Mr. David Duly, my colleague who patiently read over my draft and improved the style of this paper.

1. Norman N. Holland, *The First Modern Comedies* (Harvard U. P., 1959), p. 9.
2. Dale Underwood, *Etherege and the Seventeenth-Century Comedy of Manners* (Yale U. P., 1957), p. 59.
3. George H. Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (Cooper Square Publishers, 1968), p. 76.
4. All quotations of *She Would If She Could* are taken from the Cambridge edition. Michael Cordner (ed.), *The Plays of Sir George Etherege* (Cambrige U. P., 1982)
5. Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge U. P., 1992), p. 19, p. 33.
6. Cf. Howe, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-5.
7. Thomas H. Fujimura, *The Restoration Comedy of Wit* (Barns & Noble, 1968), pp. 36-7.
8. Fujimura, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
9. As a form of sex-antagonism, metaphoric expressions such as war, hunting, hawking, horse-breaking, fishing, trade, gambling, swindling or lawsuits are found in the play.
10. The same instances could be found in the dialogue between the witty hero and heroine of Shakespeare's comedies (for example, Katharina and Petruchio, Benedick and Beatrice).
11. Taking the case of Young Bellair in *The Man of Mode*, Dale Underwood calls him the character who belongs to "the traditional honest-man world." Cf. Underwood, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
12. The contrast between the town and the country is a motif peculiar to Restoration

comedy: the town suggests liberty, and the country, restraint. It was common knowledge to Restoration audiences that the country is a boring place and that people living there are boorish and much inferior to townsmen.

13. Northrop Fry, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton U. P., 1957), pp. 182-3.